

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Applicants appreciate the acknowledgement of allowable subject matter in claims 4 and 6-10. By the foregoing amendment, claims 3, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 21 have been amended, and claims 1, 2 and 4 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer for filing in a continuation application. Thus, claims 3 and 5-22 are currently pending in the application and subject to examination.

In the Office Action mailed September 22, 2005, 1-3, 5, 12, 14 and 18-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,392,437 to Matter et al. (hereinafter, "Matter"). Claims 11, 13, 15-17 and 20-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matter as applied to claims 1-3, 5, 12, 14 and 18-19 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,886,582 to Stansell.

Merely to facilitate allowance of the application, the Applicants have canceled claims 1, 2 and 4, and have incorporated the allowable subject matter of claim 4 into independent claims 3, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 21. Thus, amended claims 3, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 21 are in condition for allowance.

As claims 3, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 21 are allowable, the applicants submit that claims 5-11, 13, 15, 17, 20 and 22, each of which depends from one of allowable claims 3, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19 and 21, are likewise allowable.

Conclusion

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims now pending patentability distinguish the present invention from the cited references. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections and an issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing client matter number 108391-00019.

Respectfully submitted,

Arent Fox, PLLC



Michele L. Connell
Registration No. 52,763

Customer No. 004372
1050 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036-5339
Telephone No. (202) 857-6104
Facsimile No. (202) 857-6395

CMM/MLC: